

## **SUMMARY OF SPEED AND CRASH DATA AND KEY FINDINGS ON IOWA'S RURAL INTERSTATE SYSTEM**



### **Speed Data**

- The 85th percentile speed ranges from 74 mph to 79 mph on Iowa's rural Interstate system.
- The Iowa Interstate speeds are approximately the same as neighboring states that have 70 mph speed limits, and about 4 mph less than neighboring states that have a 75 mph Interstate speed limit.
- The average 85th percentile speed on Iowa's rural Interstate system has increased from 73 mph in 1996 to 76.1 mph in 2001.

### **Crash Data**

- The 2000 crash rate on Iowa's rural Interstate system was 48 crashes per 100 million miles (HMVM) of travel. In comparison, the 2000 crash rate on Iowa rural non-interstate primary highways was 102 per HMVM.
- The 2000 fatal crash rate on Iowa's rural Interstate system was 0.73 fatal crashes per HMVM. In comparison, the 2000 fatal crash rate on Iowa rural non-Interstate primary highways was 1.49 per HMVM.
- There is very little variance in crash rates along individual segments of Iowa's rural Interstate system.

### **Key Findings**

- Rural Interstate 85th percentile speeds in Iowa have increased about 11 mph since the speed limit was increased from 55 mph to 65 mph in 1987.
- In comparing crash data for three years before and after the 1987 Interstate speed limit increase, the total crash rate decreased 5 percent.
- In comparing crash data for three years before and after the 1987 Interstate speed limit increase, the fatal crash rate increased 56 percent.

1984 – 2000 CRASH RATES  
IOWA INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

	<u>Avg. Total Crash Rate*</u>	<u>Avg. Fatal Crash Rate*</u>
1984-86	62.3	0.48
1988-90	59.0	0.75
1998-2000	48.0	0.64

\* Rates per 100 Million Vehicle Miles (HMVM)

Note: The Iowa rural Interstate speed limit was raised to 65 mph on May 12, 1987.

The changes in total and fatal crash rates following the speed limit increase may at first seem to have conflicting results. However, some past research has suggested that raising speed limits on the nation's Interstate may have slightly reduced the total crash rate, but has moved crashes into a more serious crash category, resulting in higher fatal crash rates, more deaths and injuries.

Rural Interstate Fatalities in Iowa and Surrounding States

<u>State</u>	<u>Limit Change</u>	<u>1993-1995 Annual Avg.</u>	<u>1996-2001 Annual Avg.</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Iowa	No, 65 mph	32.0	31.0	- 3%
Minnesota	Yes, 70 mph	19.5	25.3	+ 30%
Missouri	Yes, 70 mph	125.0	173.6	+ 39%
Nebraska	Yes, 75 mph	19.7	31.2	+ 58%
South Dakota	Yes, 75 mph	15.0	16.2	+8%

Prepared by:

Iowa Safety Management System  
Speed Limit Task Force  
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